

Ser. No. 10/612,283
Amdt. dated July 2, 2007
Reply to Office action mailed January 31, 2007

Atty Docket#: J103UB02US00

Amendments to the Claims/Listing of the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method ~~operable on a computer~~ for automatically selecting and packaging items for mailing, comprising the steps of:
 - storing item characteristics for a plurality of items;
 - storing postal costs for packages based on package characteristics;
 - receiving a customer order specifying a plurality of items ~~for shipping~~
 - a ~~shipment~~, the shipment comprising at least one package; by mail
 - retrieving a selected characteristic for each of the plurality of items;
 - storing a list comprising identifiers corresponding to specified items;
 - automatically determining a number of packages comprising the
 - shipment and determining which items of the customer order will be
 - contained in each package ~~determining,~~
 - the determining step carried out based on the selected ~~the~~
 - identifiers, the stored item characteristics corresponding to the identifiers
 - and the postal costs for packages.
 - ~~characteristic, if a single package containing the plurality of items will~~
 - ~~exceed a desired postal rate;~~
 - ~~—— if the single package will not exceed the desired postal rate,~~
 - ~~packaging the plurality of items in a single package;~~
 - ~~—— if the single package will exceed the desired postal rate, dividing,~~
 - ~~based on the selected characteristic, the customer order into multiple sub-~~
 - ~~orders, each sub-order including a subset of the plurality of items selected~~
 - ~~so that the sub-order will be at the desired postal rate,~~
 - ~~—— printing a mailer including a control indicia on the mailer,~~
 - ~~—— automatically selecting, based on the control indicia, items for~~
 - ~~inclusion in each sub-order, and packaging each of the sub-orders~~
 - ~~individually so that the customer order comprises multiple packages;~~
 - ~~—— and mailing the single or multiple packages to the customer.~~
2. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the customer order is received by mail on a pre-printed form.

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3. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein ~~the selected~~ said stored item characteristics ~~characteristic is include at least one of chosen from the group comprising:~~ item weight, item thickness and item size.

4. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein ~~the further including a step of packaging each of the sub-orders comprises the steps of:~~

printing a respective mailers, each mailer ~~mailer for each~~
corresponding to a package for the shipment, each mailer defining
customer selected items to comprise the corresponding package; ~~sub-order;~~
placing each mailer on an assembly line; and
placing each customer selected item comprising ~~item in each sub-~~
order package on the associated corresponding mailer as the mailer
traverses the assembly line.

5. (original) A method in accordance with claim 4 wherein: each mailer comprises a printed paper mailer; each paper mailer includes, on a first side, a bar code indicative of the items to be packaged with the mailer and on a second side a customer address.

6. (original) A method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the assembly line comprises: a scanner for reading the bar code on each mailer; a plurality of hoppers, each hopper containing a plurality of like items; and a mechanism responsive to computer control for moving an item from a hopper onto a mailer.

7. (original) A method in accordance with claim 6 and further including a customer message on the front of a mailer readable by a customer and indicating that a customer order has been fulfilled in multiple packages.

8. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 7 further comprising a ~~wherein the step of packaging each of the sub-orders includes~~

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shrink-wrapping each of the ~~sub-orders in~~ packages in a plastic wrap so that the customer address and customer message are readable through the plastic wrap.

9. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 4 wherein the step of receiving a customer order is performed at a location geographically remote from the step of ~~packaging each of the sub-orders~~ placing each mailer on an assembly line.

10. (currently amended) A system for selecting and packaging items for mailing, comprising:

a processor;

a memory connected to the processor, the memory storing data and instructions for controlling the operation of the processor; the processor operative to perform the steps of

storing item characteristics for a plurality of items;

storing postal costs for packages based on package characteristics;

receiving a customer order specifying a plurality of items for shipping
a shipment, the shipment comprising at least one package; by mail

~~retrieving a selected characteristic for each of the plurality of items;~~

storing a list comprising identifiers corresponding to items to
comprise the shipment;

automatically determining a number of packages comprising the
shipment and determining which items of the customer order will be
contained in each package ~~determining,~~

the determining step carried out based on the selected the
identifiers, the stored item characteristics corresponding to the identifiers
and the postal costs for packages.

~~characteristic, if a single package containing the plurality of items will~~
~~exceed a desired postal rate;~~

~~if the single package will not exceed the desired postal rate,~~
~~packaging the plurality of items in a single package;~~

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~~_____ if the single package will exceed the desired postal rate, dividing,
based on the selected characteristic, the customer order into multiple sub-
orders, each sub-order including a subset of the plurality of items selected
so that the sub-order will be at the desired postal rate,
_____ printing a mailer including a control indicia on the mailer,
_____ automatically selecting, based on the control indicia, items for
inclusion in each sub-order, and packaging each of the sub-orders
individually so that the customer order comprises multiple packages;
_____ and mailing the single or multiple packages to the customer.~~

11. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 wherein the customer order is received by mail on a pre-printed form.

12. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 wherein the selected characteristic is chosen from the group comprising: item weight, item thickness and item size.

13. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 further including an assembly line and wherein the step of packaging each of the sub-orders comprises the steps of: printing a mailer for each sub-order; placing each mailer on the assembly line; and placing each item in each sub-order on the associated mailer as the mailer traverses the assembly line.

14. (original) A system in accordance with claim 13 wherein: each mailer comprises a printed paper mailer; each paper mailer includes, on a first side, a bar code indicative of the items to be packaged with the mailer and on a second side a customer address.

15. (original) A system in accordance with claim 14 wherein the assembly line comprises: a scanner for reading the bar code on each mailer; a plurality of hoppers, each hopper containing a plurality of like items; and a mechanism responsive to computer control for moving an item from a

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hopper onto a mailer.

16. (original) A system in accordance with claim 15 and further including a customer message on the front of a mailer readable by a customer and indicating that a customer order has been fulfilled in multiple packages.

17. (original) A system in accordance with claim 16 wherein the step of packaging each of the sub-orders includes shrink-wrapping each of the sub-orders in a plastic wrap so that the customer address and customer message are readable through the plastic wrap.

18. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 wherein the step of receiving a customer order is performed at a location geographically remote from the step of packaging each of the sub-orders.

19-22 (canceled)